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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002530

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TAGS: PREL PGOV I2

SUBJECT: PRT SALAH AD DIN: VOTE TO REMOVE GOVERNOR TRIGGERS
POLITICAL FIREWORKS

Classified By: David C. Stewart, PRT Salah ad Din Team Leader for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶11. (U) This is a Salah Ad Din Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) message.

¶12. (C) Summary: In a September 3 session, the Salah ad Din Provincial Council (PC) voted to remove the Provincial Governor, Mutashar Hussein Ilaiwee Yaseen, from office. The Governor appeared before the PC in response to their summons to answer questions about his performance in office, made a brief statement criticizing the proceedings as illegal and abruptly departed. The Governor filed an appeal of the decision with the Federal Supreme Court. Following the PC's decision, there were small demonstrations for and against the decision in Samarra and Tikrit as well as several missile attacks and bombing incidents. End Summary.

¶13. (U) On September 3, the PC held a special session to question the Salah Ad Din Governor about his job performance.

The Governor's arrival followed two failures to appear before the PC on this matter in the previous ten days. PC members told PRToffs that the Governor had been stalling to buy time in order to shore up support among senior Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) members and GOI officials in Baghdad, as well as in key areas in the province.

¶14. (U) After the PC dismissed a memo alleging that PC Chair Ahmed Abdullah Abid Khalaf al-Jabouri (Abu Mazin) did not possess a valid high school diploma (which would make him ineligible to serve on the PC), the PC Chair read the allegations against the Governor. Governor Mutashar refused to respond to the allegations, claiming that the questioning was motivated by personal animosity, that there was no evidence to support the charges, and that the questioning was illegal. After ignoring the PC's attempt to question him, he abruptly departed.

¶15. (U) Following the Governor's departure, the PC Chair Abu Mazin read out the complete list of charges before opening the floor for PC discussion. The allegations included making improper statements concerning the GoI; utilizing government resources for his Personal Security Detail (PSD); bias in the appointment of government employees; and interference in PC approved projects.

¶16. (U) The PC Chair consulted frequently with Legal Advisor Dr. Ahmed Abdullah Al Jabour to ensure all procedures for removing a government official under the Provincial Powers Law (PPL) were followed. Dr. Ahmed advised that because the Governor had refused to answer any questions, the PC could proceed with a vote. Seventeen members voted to remove Mutashar, seven voted against and four abstained, achieving the required absolute majority. The Governor filed an appeal of the decision with the Federal Supreme Court on September ¶14. The Court will have 30 days to rule on the PC action.

¶17. (U) In the days following the PC action, there were small demonstrations and several low level attacks. About 100 individuals came out in Samarra (home of the Governor) to

protest the PC's decision, while a parallel demonstration in Tikrit (primary base of the PC Chair's al Jabouri clan) supported the action. On September 5, the Joint Coordination Center (JCC) reported that the PC compound was hit with a 60mm mortar that landed in the yard; no damage or injuries occurred. On September 8, the First Deputy Governor survived an assassination attempt when a bomb targeted his motorcade in downtown Tikrit, 500 meters from the governor's building. The blast wounded three of his security guards and caused damage to two vehicles of the motorcade; some PC members and Iraqi security forces have attributed this attack to the QI Iraqi security forces have attributed this attack to the militia attached to the IIP.

¶18. (C) Comment: The PC's effort to remove the Governor appears primarily to be a response to actions by the Governor that "crossed the line" in terms of excessive patronage and incompetence. Since his appointment, the Governor appointed only IIP members to key positions in the government. While on a trip to Turkey, he openly criticized the GOI as corrupt in front of Turkish officials and Salah Ad Din council members. On numerous occasions has sent unclear, often outlandish memoranda to other government officials. His actions have marginalized the IIP in Salah ah Din and created a power struggle between the IIP and the remaining bloc of parties now aligned against them. There have been media smear campaigns, bribery attempts (one successful), and intimidation attacks against PC members and the First Deputy Governor, Ahmed Abed al-Jabour.

¶19. (C) Comment Continued: The overall response of the Provincial government has been positive. The PC appears determined to adhere to proper procedures, as witnessed by

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the PC Chair's frequent consultations with the Council's legal advisor about ensuring that PC actions comply with the Provincial Powers Law. When the citizens of Salah ad Din publicly voiced their opinions on the removal vote at demonstrations in Samarra and Tikrit, the Iraqi Security Forces took appropriate precautions and actions which helped maintain order and safety at both venues--a significant improvement, particularly in Samarra. Less positive, however, are the attacks, which unfortunately have been a too regular feature of the Iraqi political landscape. End Comment.

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